JFK Assassination System
Identification Form

Date: 8/27/201

Agency Information

AGENCY : ROCKCOM
RECORD NUMBER : 178-10004-10056

RECORD SERIES : ASSASSINATION FILES

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : MISC. ROCKEFELLER COM. AND CIA FILES (9)

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : CIA
FROM :
TO : DIRECTOR, CIA

TITLE : [Restricted]

DATE : 11/14/1962
PAGES : 33

SUBJECTS :
CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS
CUBA
CIA
ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES

DOCUMENT TYPE : MEMORANDUM
CLASSIFICATION : Top Secret
RESTRICTIONS : 1B; 1C
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 08/04/1993

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS :

Mongoose - Parrot S, 12-1

178-10004-10056

14 November 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : CIA Handling of the Soviet Build-up in Cuba, 1 July - 16 October 1962

A. The Background

1. The USSR's decision to develop Cuba as a military base must have been made by the spring of 1962, and preparations within the USSR must have been under way from that time on. There also must have been planning activities in Cuba, particularly reconnaissance and survey work. The only indication of these operations which has so far been found is a single intercepted personal message on 11 April to a Russian in Cuba who had previously been at the Kapustin Yar missile test range. This fragment was not judged solid or important enough to warrant inclusion by itself in current intelligence publications.

2. Thus, until the first evidence of the deployment began to come in late in July, Washington had no warning of the USSR's intention. Intelligence officers dealing with Cuba were focussing during July on the direction Soviet-Cuban relations would take following Soviet acquiescence in Castro's assertion of his leadership of Cuban Communism in the "Escalante affair." This attitude was reflected in reporting on the visit of Raul Castro to Moscow early in the month. The President's Intelligence Checklist, which will normally be used in this memorandum as the record of CIA reporting to the President, Secretaries of State and Defense, General Taylor, and McGeorge Bundy, reported on 4 July that Raul was "probably seeking more Soviet military aid and, specifically, more advanced equipment such as the MIG-21s and surface-to-air missiles which the USSR is already providing to Indonesia, Egypt, and Iraq." The Checklist of 19 July, however, noted that Raul had left Moscow without the usual publicity and communiqué, and surmised that this was "a pretty good sign that the visit was unproductive." (The Central Intelligence Bulletin, whenever coordination permitted, carried material generally similar to the content of the Checklist.)

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3. The Intelligence Community view of the Cuban problem in this period was crystallized in NIE 85-2-62, The Situation and Prospects in Cuba, passed by USIB on 1 August 1962, as the intelligence foundation for MONGOOSE. This estimate stated that:

a. "By force of circumstances, the USSR is becoming ever more deeply committed to preserve and strengthen the Castro regime. The USSR, however, has avoided any formal commitment to protect and defend the regime in all contingencies."

b. "We believe it unlikely that the Bloc will provide Cuba with the capability to undertake major independent military operations overseas. We also believe it unlikely that the Bloc will station in Cuba Bloc combat units of any description, at least for the period of this estimate."

c. "The Soviets...would almost certainly never intend to hazard their own safety for Cuba's sake," but "have sought to create the impression that Cuba was under the protection of their missile power..."

d. "We believe that the Bloc will continue to limit its military assistance to Cuba /to defensive weapons/. Such a policy would not preclude the provision of more advanced jet fighters, surface-to-air missiles, and modern radars, or even the provision of a token number of IL-28 jet light bombers..."

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B. The Soviet Operation Begins

4. During the last two weeks of July, Soviet ships carrying equipment and personnel for the build-up made their first voyages to Cuban ports, the first arriving in the period 26-29 July. Knowledge of some of these movements reached CIA through routine intelligence coverage of Soviet shipping before the ships reached Cuba. No particular significance is normally attached to such voyages. However, evidence gradually accumulated that the "behavior pattern" of these ships was similar to that of Soviet ships carrying arms to other countries, that even greater security measures than usual were in effect, that a number of the ships were coming from Baltic rather than Black Sea ports, that some of these were passenger ships, and finally that there was a general movement of Bloc shipping toward Cuba on an unprecedented scale.

5. Apparently, the first recognition of unusual activity in any intelligence publication was a note in a daily review of economic intelligence for CIA internal use. Commenting on an NSA report that certain Soviet ships were en route to Cuba which had declared for other destinations, this paper stated on 1 August that "at lease some, if not all, of the ships involved probably are carrying additional military equipment to Cuba." This statement was in direct contradiction to NSA's comment on the same information, i.e., that it tended to corroborate a report by the Brazilian Ambassador in Havana (earlier intercepted by NSA) that Raul Castro had asked the USSR to take back excess war materiel.

6. CIA was also in disagreement with DIA over interpretation of intelligence on the movement of shipping to Cuba throughout the month of August. The resulting difficulties in coordination of the Central Intelligence Bulletin held up publication from 3 August to 9 August of the first item on the Cuban build-up in that publication. As late as 29 August, DIA in its own daily Intelligence Summary said that "The high volume of shipping probably reflects planned increases in trade between the USSR and Cuba..." There were further difficulties resulting from CIA-DIA differences in the interpretation of photography of aircraft crates deck-loaded on Soviet ships; the record shows that CIA was

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right. Finally, it should be noted that there is a long history of CIA efforts to obtain better photography on deck cargoes and faster service in returning these pictures to Washington.

7. The Checklist reported the accumulating information fully to the President. On 4 August, it stated that "Eleven Soviet ships are on their way to Havana and we strongly suspect they are carrying arms. Such a delivery would not be far short of the total amount of arms delivered in the first half of 1962." On 9 August, it said "Soviet shipments to Cuba have been arriving on an unprecedented scale since mid-July. Some 32 vessels are involved; at least half of these we believe to be carrying arms. Five passenger ships with a total capacity of about 3,000 persons have already arrived. Some of the personnel are said to be Soviet technicians, and we have no reason to doubt this. We do not believe there are any combat troops among them."

8. The DCI on 8 August briefed the Republican Policy Committee, emphasizing the arrival of Soviet military equipment and technicians. Two days later, at a MONGOOSE meeting, he again stressed the importance of this intelligence and raised questions as to what purpose was behind the sudden movement of men and materiel. He said that the United States must face the possibility of the USSR locating MRBMs in Cuba as a step that it could justify because of US missile bases in places like Italy and Turkey.

9. Soviet operations in August involved primarily the establishment of surface-to-air missile and coast defense missile positions. By the middle of August CIA was receiving a large volume of agent and refugee reporting which, while understandably garbled and fragmentary, enabled analysts to pinpoint areas of construction and identify some of the equipment coming in. On 18 August, the Checklist reported "There are grounds for thinking that the large influx of Soviet military equipment and technicians into Cuba lately could be connected with the beginning of construction of surface-to-air missile sites. What we know so far is that the shipments have included quantities of electronic, transportation and construction equipment, some of it similar to Soviet equipment which showed up in Indonesia for the building of SAM installations, and that many of the arriving Soviets are construction personnel..." There were further Checklist items along the same line on 23 and 28 August.

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C. The July Overflight Program

10. On 10 July, General Taylor, motivated primarily by the extensive use of aerial reconnaissance in following Chinese Communist military activities in Fukien, had asked the DCI for a comprehensive review of aerial photography activities. The end-product of this exercise was a series of memoranda dated approximately 16 July from the DD/I to the DCI. The one on Cuba recommended that U-2 flights over Cuba be continued at their current level of two a month. It cited *inter alia* in justification that earlier missions over Cuba had provided "conclusive evidence that recurring reports of submarines and missile bases in Cuba have been false," and that "our most important need is for any evidence of the deployment of SA-2 missiles and/or MIG-21s in Cuba." This proposal was approved by the Special Group on 19 July and later by the President.

11. The first of the two Cuban U-2 missions authorized for August was flown on 5 August, probably just too soon to detect significant reflections of the Soviet equipment entering the island at that time. The second mission was originally scheduled for 8 August but cancelled because of weather. The next day the Special Group gave the DCI discretion to fly the second August mission "whenever the immediate situation with regard to Soviet materiel justified it." COMOR reaffirmed its requirement for the second mission on 13 August. The mission was again scheduled for the period beginning on the 19th, held up for 9 days by weather and eventually flown on 29 August. (See Para 19)

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D. Promulgation of NSAM 181 and the Response

12. On 21 August the DCI attended a meeting in Secretary Rusk's office at which were also present Secretary McNamara, Under Secretary Johnson, the Attorney General, Generals Taylor and Lemnitzer, and McGeorge Bundy. He told this group that information available since 10 August indicated the extent of Soviet aid was much greater than previously thought, and that this probably included highly-sophisticated electronic installations or missile sites, probably ground-to-air. The DCI again raised the possibility that the Soviets would locate MRBMs in Cuba, and there developed a discussion of possible US courses of action in case they did so. It was agreed that the DCI would fully brief the President the next day (which he did) and that Rusk, McNamara, Gilpatric, Taylor, Bundy and the DCI would discuss the situation with the President on 23 August.

13. At the meeting of the 23rd, a number of actions were decided upon to deal with what was agreed to be a critical problem for the United States. These actions were formalized in NSAM 181. (In addition, the President asked for a continuing analysis of the number and types of Bloc personnel and equipment in Cuba). Thus, by 23 August CIA had alerted the highest levels of the government to a rapidly unfolding Soviet military development in Cuba, including the probable establishment of surface-to-air missile sites, and the danger of surface-to-surface missiles. Furthermore the President had taken action on the intelligence received. There was at this time no evidence of any sort that surface-to-surface weapons were being installed--in fact, the MRBM units had scarcely started en route from the USSR--but the possibility had been discussed by the President and his advisors.

14. The paragraphs of NSAM 181 applicable to CIA dealt with: a) release of information, b) MONGOOSE, and c) "An analysis /which/ should be prepared of the probable military, political and psychological impact of the establishment in Cuba of either surface-to-air missiles or surface-to-surface missiles which could reach the US." The first two subjects are outside the scope of this memorandum; the third exists as a memorandum dated 31 August prepared largely by McGeorge Bundy and the DD/I. This paper, which had the benefit of preliminary results of the 29 August U-2 mission, concluded that the introduction of surface-to-air missiles was the "most probable present Soviet missile activity," and that such missiles would be a serious threat to aerial reconnaissance, but not to "determined US attack." It stated that "surface-to-surface missiles with nuclear warheads would constitute a very significant military

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threat to the continental US." The memorandum concluded that introduction of any missiles "will have a substantial political and psychological impact, while surface-to-surface missiles would create a condition of great alarm."

15. In a memorandum of 27 August, General Carter reported to Mr. Bundy what actions CIA was taking in response to NSAM 181. He named the officers responsible for the three items mentioned above and listed the following additional measures:

a. Task Force W was to look into the possibility of removing restrictions on mounting clandestine operations out of Guantanamo.

b. The Board of National Estimates was to establish a procedure to ensure continuing analysis of the numbers and types of Communist Bloc personnel entering Cuba, quantity and types of Bloc equipment and its probable use, and all construction, particularly missile sites.

c. The Board was also to assess the physical and psychological dangers to the US and Latin America of missile installations in Cuba. (The two Board actions, which were later synthesized in the paper which eventually appeared on 19 September as SNIE 85-3, had already been set in motion by the DD/I, in a memo to the AD/NE of 24 August).

d. CIA was to begin immediately publishing a daily paper on Cuba, including current intelligence, estimative assessments and coverage of the press, to be distributed to the President, Bundy, McNamara, Gilpatric, Lemnitzer, Rusk, Taylor, and Robert Kennedy. (This paper, the Cuban Highlights memorandum, was issued by CIA beginning 27 August, using a philosophy and format similar to the Checklist. A few additional officials were later added to its distribution. It was discontinued on 19 September, because General Carter and the DD/I concluded that sufficient emphasis was by then being given to Cuban reporting in regular intelligence publications).

e. CIA would arrange intelligence collection overflights "as frequently as the situation demands." (The results of this action make up the central theme of this paper.)

f. Task Force W was to prepare a plan of operations for MONGOOSE B Plus.

16. The minutes of USIB show that at its next meeting, 29 August, Mr. Hilsman requested an SNIE on the military build-up in Cuba, to be submitted to USIB at its next regular meeting.

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Presumably Mr. Hilsman was also acting in response to NSAM 181. In any case, the paper he requested and the Board memorandum already requested by the DD/I were combined. Successive drafts of such a paper, prepared by the ONE staff, were quickly overtaken by the photography which became available after 29 August. At the USIB meeting of 7 September, further attempts to write it were deferred until the new information could be digested. This estimate, SNIE 85-3-62, was in fact passed by USIB on 19 September. Its substance will be discussed later. (See Paras. 26-29)

17. Also at the 29 August USIB meeting, two other pertinent subjects were discussed. First, General Carter and Mr. Cline raised the question of more rapid delivery from Turkey and Denmark of Navy photography of outbound Soviet ships (see para. 6). Second, General Carter informed the Board that he had two days earlier asked General Lemnitzer about the possibility of low-level photography using RF-101 or F8U aircraft and that Lemnitzer had replied that something "could be dug up." The conversation with Lemnitzer was the result of an instruction telephoned from out of town by the DCI, who was concerned over the long delay of the 29 August mission by weather. (The DCI departed Washington on leave on 23 August, went first to the West Coast, left the country on 30 August for the Riviera, and returned to Washington on 23 September.) On 30 August Lemnitzer told the Special Group of this discussion with General Carter. The Group agreed to take cognizance of the matter and reopen it "when specific targets and information needs could be identified."

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E. Hard Intelligence on the Build-Up (Defensive Phase)

18. During the last week in August, CIA continued to follow the progress of the Soviet build-up, using shipping information, communications intelligence, and agent and refugee sources. The Checklist of 29 August reported that:

> "There is no sign of a let-up in the movement of Soviet equipment and personnel into Cuba.
>
> "By latest count, there have during the past six weeks been some 80 voyages to Cuban ports by Bloc vessels and 20-35 by ships under Communist charter.
>
> "We note that deliveries of industrial equipment, foodstuffs, and other nonmilitary items are being made largely on chartered Western ships, probably because so many Soviet ships are involved in hauling military gear."

19. The first hard evidence on what the Soviets were up to in Cuba was provided by photography of the 29 August mission. The President was told, in the Checklist of 31 August that:

> "Preliminary information from the 30 /sic/ August U-2 mission shows at least seven SA-2 sites on the western half of the island. Manning of this many sites would require some 1500-2000 Bloc troops. We are able to report on the basis of what is known so far that construction of the sites appears to be fairly advanced and that there are canvas-covered missiles in the vicinity of some sites. The existence of additional sites can probably be assumed.
>
> "The same source reveals seven or eight Soviet missile-equipped torpedo boats and an undetermined number of Soviet tanks. The Cubans have had Soviet tanks for some time, but this is our first indication that they now have boats of this type. They appear to be KOMAR-class converted PT-boats, mounting two surface-to-surface missiles with an estimated range of 35 nautical miles."

After further analysis this information appeared in the Central Intelligence Bulletin of 6 September. On the 4th and 5th, General Carter briefed a number of congressional leaders, including the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees. In a White House statement, also of 4 September, the President publicly confirmed the presence of SA-2s and KOMAR-class boats.

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20. The 29 August mission had confirmed the establishment of a missile defense of Western Cuba. The first mission for September (of the two which had been authorized as a routine matter by the Special Group on 19 July; see para 10) was flown on schedule on 5 September and revealed similar defenses in Las Villas Province. In retrospect, it can be seen that the two groups of SA-2 sites surrounded the areas in which MRBM and IRBM site construction was planned. Photography of these areas in the 29 August and 5 September missions, however, gave no recognizable evidence that any such construction was then under way (although re-examination showed a few vehicles and some construction material at Guanajay Site 1 on 29 August). In fact, there was probably no ballistic missile equipment in Cuba at the time (see discussion in paras. 36-39).

21. More detailed readout of the 29 August mission had, by about 6 September, led CIA analysts to suspect the presence of another kind of missile site--possibly surface-to-surface--at Banes, on the northeastern coast. General Carter so informed the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense on 6 September. No equivalent of such a weapon had been identified in the USSR in earlier U-2 photography. Lacking such background, further information and study were necessary to determine the characteristics and range of the missiles. Programs for both were set in motion.

22. COMOR, at the request of the Secretary of State, on 9 September reviewed the vehicles available for reconnaissance of Banes. The next day, General Carter in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense requested "necessary actions, (including Special Group approval) to provide for the employment, when directed by higher authority, of tactical-type reconnaissance" against the cruise-missile site at Banes. At the Special Group meeting of 14 September, a JCS representative briefed on capabilities for low-level coverage of certain targets in Cuba; however, the Secretary of Defense was recorded as not wanting the operation considered further until results of further U-2 reconnaissance of these targets were available, i.e., General Carter's proposal had been overtaken by the decision on U-2 coverage taken on 10 September (see paras 24-25). Meanwhile, further analysis of the 5 September photography had resulted in a CIA study dated 14 September which concluded definitively that the Banes site was intended for a short-range coastal defense missile. A fully checked-out item appeared in the <u>Central Intelligence Bulletin</u> of 18 September.

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23. One additional item was picked up by the 5 September mission, the presence of an assembled MIG-21 at Santa Clara airfield, along with several others still in crates. This was not reported by CIA in the Checklist, but was reported in the Central Intelligence Bulletin of 8 September. Actually, these MIG-21 crates (readily identifiable from photographs) had arrived in Cuba about 1 September aboard a Soviet ship which had been photographed en route, but the photographs were not received in Washington for several weeks. Upon the arrival of these and photographs of other ships carrying MIG-21 crates, an item was published in the Central Intelligence Bulletin of 27 September--with DIA withholding concurrence (see para. 6)--that between 22 and 30 MIG-21s had been delivered to Cuba. This information was also reported in the Checklist of 27 September.

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F. The New Overflight Program

24. The results of the 29 August and 5 September missions, in particular the confirmation of SA-2 sites, led to a full review of the overflight program for Cuba. This took place in the White House on 10 September. Among those present were Mr. Rusk, Mr. Robert Kennedy, Mr. McGeorge Bundy, General Carter, and General Lansdale. The decisions of this meeting are crucial to the record, and some discussion of the atmosphere in which they were taken is required. There were three major factors:

a. On 30 August, a SAC U-2 had overflown Sakhalin Island. The USSR had protested on 4 September, the US had acknowledged the overflight, and the incident has received major play in the world press. This had been followed on 8 September by the loss of Mission GRC-127 over Communist China, accompanied by even greater publicity. As a result, most of the participants were--to varying degrees--reluctant to chance another U-2 incident at this time. This meant that they were naturally hesitant to authorize any flights over areas where SA-2s might be operational.

b. Second, there is no record that the MRBM problem was discussed. The hard intelligence gathered so far on the Soviet build-up (the Banes problem was still up in the air), was not such as to produce a sense of alarm or a feeling that urgent action was required. The establishment of SA-2s and other advanced defensive systems had been foreseen in the NIE of 1 August and their probable arrival had been fully reported during the intervening period. Hence confirmation came not as a shock, but as a problem to be dealt with deliberately. (It may even have served to relax the sense of urgency generated by the President's decisions of 23 August, the known usually being less alarming than the unknown.) The participants therefore felt that the next step was to provide systematic coverage of the rest of Cuba, from which the full story of what the USSR had put into the island could be developed. They felt no immediate need for re-coverage of the areas covered by the two previous missions.

c. Finally, the participants were operating in the atmosphere of the time. The Cubans had been claiming that U.S. invasion was imminent. The Soviet diplomatic and propaganda apparatus was attempting to focus attention

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on Berlin and hinting at a confrontation late in the year, thus creating the impression that a Berlin crisis would not come until after the US election. In fact, the USSR in its statement of the following day (11 September) on Cuba stated this explicitly. There were vague hints of Khrushchev's intent to attend the UNGA in New York. Khrushchev appears now to have been throwing up a diplomatic smoke-screen behind which to carry out the deployment of strategic forces into Cuba, but those present at the meeting of 10 September did not have the benefit of this hindsight. Furthermore, they must all have been acutely aware that Cuba was potentially the campaign issue that could most seriously damage the Administration in the election campaign then beginning.

25. At the meeting, the Secretary of State objected to the CIA proposal for two extended overflights covering the remainder of the island not covered in the 29 August and 5 September missions. He insisted, instead, that coverage of the rest of Cuba should be designed so that peripheral flights over international waters would not be combined with overflights of Cuban territory. To meet his wishes, the program was divided into four flights, two overflights and two peripheral. One overflight was to be over the Isle of Pines and the other over the part of Cuba east of 77° West to cover Guantanamo and Banes. One peripheral flight was to cover the north coast of eastern Cuba, the other the south coast. The overflights would be quick "in-and-out" operations, while all four were to be designed for maximum safety. (There is apparently no written record that a decision was made not to fly over known SA-2 sites, but in obtaining approval for the tracks it was necessary to provide assurance that they did not do so.) Later the DCI negotiated with the Department of State permission to extend the Isle of Pines mission over the Bay of Pigs area of Cuba proper. The President approved this program, authorizing three flights in September in addition to the one remaining of the normal September allocation (Special Group action of 19 July). Thus, the record shows that the President authorized everything the Special Group requested.

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G. SNIE 85-3-62

26. The lack of urgency expressed in these decisions was also reflected in the deliberations over and the content of SNIE 85-3-62, The Military Build-up in Cuba, passed by USIB on 19 September. This estimate, which was generated by the issuance of NSAM 181, must be viewed as a symptom of the state of mind in the Intelligence Community and in Washington generally during the first half of September. There were no dissents and no major disagreements in preparation of the final draft. Its key findings are as follows:

a. "We believe that the USSR values its position in Cuba primarily for the political advantages to be derived from it and consequently that the main purpose of the military build-up in Cuba is to strengthen the Communist regime there against what the Cubans and the Soviets conceive to be a danger that the US may attempt by one means or another to overthrow it. The Soviets evidently hope to deter any such attempt by enhancing Castro's defensive capabilities and by threatening Soviet military retaliation. At the same time, they evidently recognize that the development of an offensive military base in Cuba might provoke US military intervention and thus defeat their present purpose."

b. "The Soviets themselves are probably still uncertain about their future military program for Cuba. Indeed they probably intend to test US and Latin American reactions as they go along."

c. "As the build-up continues, the USSR may be tempted to establish in Cuba other weapons represented to be defensive in purpose but of a more 'offensive' character: e.g., light bombers, submarines, and additional types of short-range surface-to-surface missiles...."

d. "However, they are well aware that the question of offensive as opposed to defensive weapons in Cuba has become a major political issue."

e. "The establishment on Cuban soil of Soviet nuclear striking forces which would be used against the US would be incompatible with Soviet policy as we presently estimate it. It would indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in US-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far...However, Soviet military planners have almost certainly considered the contribution which Cuban bases might make to the

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Soviet strategic posture and, in that connection, the feasibility and utility of deploying nuclear delivery systems to Cuba. Therefore, this contingency must be examined carefully, even though it would run counter to current Soviet policy."

f. "Soviet planners might see some utility in deploying MRBMs and IRBMs to Cuba in order to supplement the limited number of ICBMs now believed to be operational in the USSR and to reach targets beyond the range of submarine-launched missiles."

g. "The establishment on Cuban soil of a significant strike capability with such weapons would represent a sharp departure from Soviet practice, since such weapons have so far not been installed even in Satellite territory...The Soviets might think that the political effect of defying the US by stationing Soviet nuclear striking power in so menacing a position would be worth a good deal if they could get away with it. However, they would almost certainly estimate that this could not be done without provoking a dangerous US reaction."

h. "Although the Soviets may see some military advantages in Cuba as a strategic strike base, the risks would be great and the political implications would run counter to the kind of policy they are actually pursuing in Latin America. They do not propose to win the region for communism by military conquest. They count instead on a process of political action...."

27. In commenting on these statements it must first be recognized that the judgment on the degree of risk which the USSR was willing to accept was gravely in error. It should also be recognized that the community was virtually unanimous in support of this judgment; deployment of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons outside the USSR was without precedent. Further, while the first ballistic missiles had probably arrived in Cuba in the period 7-15 September, (see para. 37) the first reports from ground observers who had seen them had not arrived in Washington by 19 September; there was no evidence available that MRBMs were on the way. What the estimate failed to do, however, was to give adequate weight to the pace at which Soviet operations were moving and to the great probability that the new installations were manned by Soviet personnel. The community was still thinking in terms of the rather deliberately-paced Soviet military aid programs for the UAR, Iraq, and Indonesia (and indeed for Cuba in the 1960-62 period) when there was already good evidence that the Cuban program had departed from this pattern.

28. Moreover, the Indonesian program too had broken the pattern only a month before, when the USSR showed itself willing to accept a substantially increased degree of risk for the

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sake of a political gain something less than vital to Soviet interests. The original contracts for Indonesia had been roughly similar to those for the UAR and Iraq. They included 14 SA-2 sites, 12 KOMARs, 26 TU-16s (12 equipped with air-to-surface missiles) and 12 submarines, all to be manned by Indonesians and to be delivered at a pace consonant with the required training of personnel. However, as the crisis over West New Guinea approached its climax of August, Soviet eagerness to embroil the Indonesians in open warfare with the Dutch led them to accelerate delivery schedules and to permit the use of Soviet personnel to operate some of the weapons being provided. Six submarines manned by Soviet crews actually conducted war patrols under nominal Indonesian command. Thus by mid-August the USSR had shown itself willing to take some risk of military engagement with an ally of the United States, albeit the degree of risk involved was far less than in the Cuban venture.

29. For the record, there is no evidence that the existence of SNIE 85-3 had any inhibiting influence on later decisions. It was not, for instance, cited to support an argument against continuing overflights. Nor did it affect current intelligence reporting; this is conducted independently of the estimative process and provides a check on the continuing validity of standing estimates.

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H. Views of the DCI

30. The only available record of dissent from the judgments made in Washington during the first half of September, both estimative and operational, is that of the DCI himself, who, although vacationing on the Riviera, was kept informed by CIA cable. On 7 September, he cabled General Carter urging frequent repeat reconnaissance missions and stating that "my hunch is we might face prospect of Soviet short-range surface-to-surface missiles of portable types in Cuba which could command important targets in Southeast US and possibly Caribbean areas." On 10 September, the DCI again cabled "Difficult for me to rationalize extensive costly defenses being established in Cuba...appears to me quite possible measures now being taken are for purpose of ensuring secrecy of some offensive capability such as MRBMs to be installed by Soviets after present phase completed and country secured from overflights. Suggest Board of National Estimates study motives...." (The Board's response is in effect contained in SNIE 85-3.)

31. On 13 September and again on 16 September the DCI repeated these premonitions. In the latter cable he added "Do not wish to be overly alarming this matter but believe CIA and community must keep Government informed of danger of a surprise and also that detection of preparatory steps possibly beyond our capability once Cuba defense system operative." Finally, on 20 September, the DCI expressed reservations on the conclusions of SNIE 85-3, which had been cabled to him, saying "as an alternative I can see that an offensive Soviet base in Cuba will provide Soviets with most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas and hence they might take unexpected risks in order to establish such a position." These views were provided to the DD/I and the Board of National Estimates.

32. As a result of the DCI's pressure there was a renewed examination of other methods of reconnaissance of Cuba. (It should be noted here that this discussion was in terms of what might be necessary after the establishment of a complete SA-2 defense had made use of the U-2 impossible, with the implicit thought that only at this point would the Soviets risk the introduction of such weapons as MRBMs.) On 19 September, at USIB, General Carter stated his desire to use RF-101s over Cuba. He also said he thought use of the FIREFLY drone over Cuba could be justified to the Special

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Group, adding that "we cannot put a stop to collection in Cuba; otherwise the President would never know when the point of decision was reached." The Special Group at its next meeting approved consideration of the use of FIREFLY and COMOR forwarded to USIB on 27 September a program for its use. (No FIREFLY missions have yet been attempted.)

33. Another attempt during this period to get additional coverage was the programming of KEYHOLE Mission 9045 (29 September - 2 October) to photograph Cuba. The results were unsatisfactory, largely because of cloud cover.

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I. CIA Reporting during September

34. The progressive uncovering of the Soviet program in Cuba was reported in detail by CIA current intelligence. Pertinent samples from the Checklist are:

a. "The number of confirmed SAM sites remains at 12, but the likelihood that others are under construction grows, with the latest evidence pointing to the Isle of Pines as one of the additional locations." (14 September)

b. "A message intercepted yesterday on a net serving Soviet forces in Germany called for 'volunteers for the protection of Cuba.' We are not sure of the weight to be placed on this and another intercept referring to the isolation of 'volunteers.' If valid, they would suggest that the influx of Soviet military personnel to Cuba is not finished. We are investigating further." (15 September)

c. "We have spotted two more Soviet passenger vessels en route to Cuba. Their arrival will raise our estimate of technicians on the scene to about 4,200. We are beginning to see some tenuous evidence foreshadowing the appearance of SAM sites in Camaguey Province." (18 September)

d. "The interception on 15 September of a signal from a missile-associated radar, probably coming from the surface-to-air missile site at Mariel, suggests that the site is or soon will be operational.

"The message asking for volunteers for service in Cuba, which we reported Saturday, has now cropped up on enough Soviet military radio nets to reveal that a fairly general recruiting campaign is going on. There is no indication yet of the numbers involved." (19 September)

e. "Evidence is still coming in on Moscow's canvass of its military forces for volunteers to serve in Cuba. This activity is puzzling; we have never seen anything like it before.

"The move may be purely administrative: to replace personnel who had been suddenly ordered there with others prepared to stay for some time. On the other hand, it could mean another sizable increment to Soviet personnel in Cuba or a belief in Moscow that its people are likely to be engaged in combat. We are trying to get a better answer." (21 September)

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f. "Our running account of the number of Soviet dry-cargo vessels making the voyage to Cuba since mid-July is now over 100. About 85 of these probably were carrying military hardware.

"The Cuban Foreign Office on Tuesday ordered Western correspondents to put in for new credentials by today, telling them that all of Cuba beyond Havana's city limits is out of bounds except by special permission." (27 September)

35. During this period General Carter, at the President's instructions, briefed General Eisenhower on the Cuban situation on 10 September. On 12 September he briefed the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees. Although out of time sequence, it should also be noted here, because the information presented was essentially more of the same, that the DCI again briefed General Eisenhower on 3 October and Congressman Cannon on 9 October.

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J. The Soviet Offensive Deployment

36. At this point, it is necessary to retrace a few steps in time and discuss what was actually going on in Cuba. Examination of information now available makes it possible to outline with a fair degree of confidence a time-table of the Soviet program which is generally consistent from site to site. This begins with the construction of SAM defenses, first in the west around San Cristobal and Guanajay, then in central Cuba around Sagua la Grande and Remedios, finally in the rest of the island. Next, in each case, comes the eviction of local inhabitants at each site, road improvement, and the establishment of restricted construction areas. Finally comes the arrival of equipment at each site according to what appears a carefully prepared schedule. Apparently, no recognizable missile equipment was moved to the MRBM sites and no major construction was begun at the IRBM sites until at least two weeks after the last U-2 overflight of the area and until the US had publicly acknowledged the presence of SA-2 sites in Cuba.

37. The first large pieces of equipment for the MRBM sites near San Cristobal were probably shipped from the USSR on the ship Omsk, which arrived at Mariel on 7 or 8 September. A second shipment followed on the Poltava which arrived on 15 September. This equipment was moved to San Cristobal by truck at night, with the first convoys probably arriving at the sites about 17 September. That is, 17 September is the earliest date at which photography might have detected the first MRBM equipment at San Cristobal.

38. Construction equipment and material for the Guanajay fixed IRBM sites began to arrive at Mariel about mid-August, minor activity of an indefinite type was noted there in the 29 August photography, and major construction had probably begun by 15 September. (The fact that shipments to Guanajay started before those to San Cristobal reflects the longer lead-time required for construction of a fixed site). It is not possible to say how soon after 15 September the activity might have been recognizable from the air as an IRBM site.

39. The sites in Las Villas Province were established on a slightly later, but similar, time scale. Equipment for the Sagua La Grande MRBM sites was probably landed at Casilda, on the south coast. The most likely ship to have carried the large items is the Kimovsk, which docked

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there on 22 September. This equipment must have moved to the site during the last week of September, and was probably detectable from photography after 1 October. The Remedios IRBM site construction was parallel to the Guanajay schedule, but also about two weeks behind. Photography of 5 September was negative, but road improvement began shortly thereafter, and a flow of construction material from the port of Isabela, on the north coast, began. The estimated date for the beginning of major construction is about 1 October. Again the date at which the site acquired a recognizable photographic signature is not determinable.

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K. The Targeting of San Cristobal

40. Although the sites themselves were closed to ground observation, the movement of equipment to them from the ports was in fact seen by CIA agents and by a number of individuals who later fled to the US. The agents reported this information as soon as they were able, but in most cases had to depend on secret writing for communication. Hence, there was a lag of several days at least before their information became available. Refugee reports were delayed considerably longer for other, and uncontrollable, reasons--the time of the individual's decision to leave Cuba, his discovery of means for doing so, and his delivery to an interrogation center. Many of the reports so received dealt with unidentifiable construction activity. Many of them, because of the time-lags noted above, did not arrive in Washington until after 14 October, and some are still coming in.

41. Nevertheless, by about 1 October, the San Cristobal area had been pinpointed as a suspect MRBM site and photographic confirmation had been requested. This represents a considerable technical achievement. To understand why, it is again necessary to back-track in time. Since the moment of Castro's triumphal march into Havana, the Intelligence Community had been flooded with reports of Soviet weapons shipments and missile installations in Cuba. There were several hundred such reports, claiming the presence of everything from small arms to ICBMs, before August 1960, i.e., before the USSR had supplied Cuba with any weapons at all. More specifically, CIA's files contain 211 intelligence reports (this does not include press items) on missile and missile-associated activity in Cuba before 1 Jan 1962. All of these were either totally false or misinterpretations by the observer of other kinds of activity. CIA analysts had naturally come to view all such reports with a high degree of suspicion.

42. On 15 February 1962 an interagency interrogation center was established by CIA at Opa Locka, near Miami, to handle Cuban refugees and improve the quality of intelligence collected from them. It was manned by trained bilingual interrogators from the armed services and CIA. The establishment of Opa Locka coincided with a sharp drop in reports of missile activity received in Washington. When the defensive phase of the Soviet buildup began, the volume of Opa Locka reporting rose very rapidly, and provided good information on the types of equipment coming in, on the use of Soviet personnel and on the security precautions imposed by the Soviets on this operation. (Such reports were the basis for the Checklist item cited in para 9).

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43. For the better part of two years, CIA had been checking information obtained from refugee, defector, and agent sources with NPIC whenever it was apparent that the information was of a kind that could be verified or negated by aerial reconnaissance. In May 1962, NPIC began publishing a series of formal listings (Photographic Evaluation of Information on Cuba) in which these reports were evaluated in the light of photographic coverage. In the 7 issues of this publication between 31 May and 5 October NPIC examined 138 raw reports referred to it for comment. Of this total, only three cited missile activity which could not be linked directly to the SA-2 and cruise missile deployments. NPIC's evidence negated those three.

44. When the first indications of build-up began to come in in August, these procedures were further tightened. CIA current intelligence was ordered orally by the DD/I's office on about 14 August not to publish any information on the construction of missile bases in Cuba until they had been checked out with NPIC. (This instruction was in the field of intelligence technique rather than of policy; it had no relation to later restrictions; (see para 50). Between 14 August and mid-October this office sent NPIC 13 memoranda asking for a check on 25 separate reports containing information which was thought to raise the possibility of Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba. A great many more such reports were checked with NPIC informally by telephone. In all cases, NPIC either lacked the necessary coverage or made a negative finding.

45. On 20 August, the COMOR Targeting Working Group (chaired and staffed largely by CIA) set up the first comprehensive card file system for Cuban targets. An example of its procedures is the handling of targets in the Sagua La Grande area. Based on refugee reporting, the COMOR Targeting Working Group on 27 August pinpointed four farms in this area as suspect missile sites. Readout of the 29 August coverage showed an SA-2 site near Sagua La Grande which apparently was the basis for the reported activity there, and the target card was changed to show a confirmed SA-2 site. It should be noted that knowledge that this site was in the area could have led analysts to misinterpret any subsequent reports of MRBM activity as part of the SAM development, but in fact no such reports were received.

46. By September, the volume of agent and refugee reporting had become very large indeed. During the month 882 reports on internal activities in Cuba were disseminated, exclusive of telegraphic dissemination. (The CIA clandestine collectors report that their output represented only the small publishable fraction of the raw material collected.) A substantial

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proportion of these dealt with the deployment of defensive missiles and related activities. Knowledge on the part of the analysts that such a deployment was in fact going on, plus the normal difficulties encountered by untrained observers in telling an offensive missile from a defensive one, tended to throw a sort of smoke-screen around the Soviet offensive deployment when it finally began. The CIA analytic apparatus, however, recognized and correlated the first authentic reports of MRBM equipment ever to be received in Washington, and took action upon them. It targeted the San Cristobal area, not as another location where alleged missile activity should be negated by photography, but as a suspect SS-4 site.

47. This process took about three weeks, from the date when the first observation was made on the ground in Cuba to the preparation of the target card. The two reports from Opa Locka which triggered it were:

a. An observation in Havana on 12 September of a convoy carrying long canvas-covered objects which the source identified under interrogation as resembling SS-4s. This report, which was disseminated by CIA on 21 September, contained sufficient accurate detail to alert intelligence analysts.

b. An observation on 17 September of a convoy moving toward the San Cristobal area. This information, received on 27 September, dovetailed in many respects with the earlier report.

48. The arrival of the second report led CIA analysts to a tentative conclusion that the two observers had in fact seen the same convoy, and that there was a possibility of the SS-4 identification being genuine. A day or so earlier, a target card on San Cristobal had been prepared on the basis of a vague report of "Russians building a rocket base." Now this card was removed and, with the two reports cited above and other less specific information on activity in this area which was beginning to trickle in, a new card was prepared between 1 and 3 October which was in effect a priority requirement for photographic coverage. This card was used in the targeting of the 14 October flight (see para 63). It read as follows: "Collateral reports indicate the existence of a restricted area in Pinar del Rio Province which is suspected of including an SSM site under construction, particularly SS-4 Shyster. The area is bounded by a line connecting the following four town: Consolacion del Norte (8332N/2244W); San Diego del Los Banos (8325N/2235W); San Cristobal (8301N/2243W); and Las Pozos (8317N/2250W). Requirement: Search the area delineated for possible surface missile construction, with particular attention to SS-4 Shyster."

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49. Another report, too general to be used in the process described above, is nevertheless of interest as the first good information distributed on the Soviet offensive build-up. On 20 September, CIA disseminated an agent report that Castro's personal pilot, Claudio Morinas, had said on 9 September "We have 40-mile range guided missiles, both surface-to-surface and surface-to-air, and we have a radar system which covers, sector by sector, all of the Cuban air space and (beyond) as far as Florida. There are also many mobile ramps for intermediate range rockets."

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L. Limitations on Publications

50. At some point, probably just after 27 September, an item on the subject of possible strategic weapons in Cuba might have been written for CIA current intelligence publications. It could not be written because there was an injunction not to do so. By the time that hard information began to come in early in September, the USIB principals had become acutely conscious of the distinction publicly made by the President between offensive and defensive weapons in Cuba. Aware that they were dealing with an explosive political issue and aware also that "leakage" of intelligence on offensive weapons, true or false, would seriously limit the President's freedom of action in dealing with what might become a major international crisis, they had evolved a system for limiting dissemination of such information. Analysis would continue and senior policy officials would be briefed, but no material would appear in formal intelligence publications without the approval of the USIB principals. These instructions were first issued orally, and later (on 11 October) formalized by USIB in the "PSALM" system (X-Ray Funnel for SIGINT). The key passages in USIB's order were: "Such information or intelligence will be disseminated outside each USIB intelligence component only to specific individuals on an EYES ONLY basis who by virtue of their responsibilities as advisers to the President have a need to know," and "There is no intent hereby, however, to inhibit the essential analytic process."

51. It should also be noted that the order not to publish anything on missile sites without NPIC corroboration (Para 44) had never been rescinded. The effect this would have had on reporting in late September and October if the other ban had not been in effect is difficult to determine.

52. These restrictions did not apply to the Checklist, but the Checklist writers drew for their Cuban information largely on the Cuban Daily Summary, a compendium of reporting on Cuba published by CIA. Since the Summary was affected by the restrictions, this practice, imposed by the sheer volume of raw material coming in on Cuba, had the effect of cutting the Checklist off from information on offensive weapons.

53. Moreover, neither the Checklist group, nor any other current intelligence officers, knew that the possibility that a Soviet strategic missile base might be established in Cuba had been raised by the DCI and seriously discussed by the President and his advisors more than a month earlier (See Para 13). In other words the thrust of NSAM 181 had been so watered down by

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time and bureaucratic process that it reached the working level only in the form of SNIE 85-3, which held that establishment of such a base was most improbable. (See, however, para 29)

54. It is difficult to say whether information from ground sources would have been published had there not been a blanket injunction against it. The analysts too were sensitive to the potential political impact of the reports they were receiving; this would not have influenced them against publication, but would have made them want to be doubly sure, especially on a subject with a history reaching back to Our Man in Havana. In addition, rigid compartmentation was maintained between the COMOR-Special Group organization responsible for collection and the intelligence components responsible for analysis. Few, if any, CIA analysts working on the Cuban problem even had IDEALIST clearances. As a result, they did not know that no overflights of Pinar del Rio and Las Villas were included in the September program, or that this program was seriously delayed. They had no way of knowing that the photographic verification they had requested would not be soon forthcoming, and they might well have delayed publication from day to day in hopes of receiving it.

55. Nevertheless, it can be established that if the injunction against publication had not existed there would have been some reflection of the refugee reports in the Cuban Daily Summary, which is not highly selective. In retrospect, it seems quite possible--but by no means certain--that they would then have been picked up in the Checklist, but it is extremely doubtful if they would have survived the coordination process for the Central Intelligence Bulletin. Thus, at the most the President might have learned that there was suspicious activity around San Cristobal slightly more than a week before he apparently did.

56. In sum the CIA analysts believed they had done their duty by targeting the San Cristobal area for photographic coverage, but no word of their concern over activity in this area had appeared in an intelligence publication. It appears highly probable that the Special Group first heard of this concern at its meeting on 9 October, when (see para. 63) it ordered a U-2 mission which covered the area.

57. The gap of 7-10 days between the key analytic correlation of reports and the Special Group meeting can probably be attributed to the cumbersome processes of the administrative structure supporting the Special Group. This machinery was designed to provide elaborate justifications and back-up paper work before each decision was made, procedures reaching back into the early history of U-2 operations over the USSR. They were intended for the control of deliberate strategic reconnaissance of the USSR, and not for a fast-moving situation such as that in Cuba, which was rapidly becoming tactical. In fact, after readout of the 14 October mission they were jettisoned.

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M. Progress of the September Overflight Program

58. While the MRBM and IRBM deployment continued and the first good ground reports began to filter out of Cuba, the four-flight reconnaissance program approved on 10 September was being pushed forward. Unfortunately, this program was seriously delayed by bad weather. Not until 26 September could the first successful mission be flown, over Banes and Guantanamo. (A mission was flown on 17 September but its targets were completely cloud-covered.) On 27 and 28 September the weather was bad again, but on the 29th the Isle of Pines - Bay of Pigs mission was successfully flown. The weather again turned bad until 5 October, when the south coast peripheral mission was accomplished. The next day, the north coast peripheral mission aborted, but was successfully completed on 7 October.

59. Thus, completion of the September program took 26 days, from 12 September--the earliest date on which missions approved on the 10th could have been flown--through 7 October. On 20 of these days weather was bad over the areas not yet overflown (the criterion for launch was a forecast of less than 25 percent cloud cover). On four days successful missions were flown. On one day a mission was launched but aborted, and one day was used to alert a mission which was launched the following day. Availability of aircraft was not a limiting factor.

60. These missions accomplished their purpose, i.e., they established almost completely the location of SA-2 sites on the island. They did not--and, since they were designed to avoid SAM-defended areas, could not--detect the ballistic missile deployments then under way. The combined effect of the Special Group decision of 10 September and the weather conditions of the period following was to delay consideration of what reconnaissance activities should next be undertaken over Cuba until early October.

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N. The Special Group Decision of 9 October

61. By late September the delays in accomplishing the four-flight program, coupled with a mass of evidence that the Soviet build-up was continuing, had generated a greatly increased sense of urgency in Washington. It should again be noted, however, that high-level consideration of the possibility that MRBMs might be deployed to Cuba had always been in terms of Soviet action after the SA-2 defense was fully operational. There is no documentary evidence of action directed toward the overflight of SAM-defended areas until the Special Group (Augmented) meeting of 4 October. At this meeting the DCI pointed out that U-2 flights were now (before the last two missions of the 10 September program) restricted by the presence of SAM sites to the southeastern quadrant of Cuba. According to the minutes of this meeting "it was questioned /by the DCI/ whether this was a reasonable restriction at this time, particularly since the SAMs were almost certainly not operational." The Group then ordered the NRO to prepare an overall program for reconnaissance of Cuba for presentation at the Group's meeting of 9 October.

62. On 6 October, COMOR provided to the NRO a memorandum entitled "Intelligence Justification and Requirements for Overflight of Cuba" for use in this presentation. Para A1. of this paper stated that "there is now a pressing and continuing need for up-to-date intelligence on the progress of the Soviet arms build-up in Cuba. The very highest levels of the government are dependent upon this intelligence to assist in making policy decisions of immediate and vital concern to the nation." Para A2., commenting on the absence of coverage of western Cuba since 29 August, included the statement that "Ground observers have, in several recent instances, reported sightings of what they believe to be Soviet MRBMs in Cuba. These reports must be confirmed or denied by photo coverage." Attached to the memorandum were a number of target lists, on which the area previously targeted around San Cristobal appears, together with recommendations for attack of particular targets by satellite, U-2, oblique, FIREFLY, or F8U-1P/RF-101 photography. (USIB, considering this paper on 6 October, recommended to the Special Group full coverage of two of these lists which did not specifically include San Cristobal, but which by its nature would have covered that area and the other ballistic missile sites as well.)

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63. At the Special Group meeting on 9 October, NRO's first recommendation was "A U-2 probe over the suspect MRBM site as soon as weather permits." This referred to the area targeted by COMOR near San Cristobal (see Para 48). The operation, which was to be supported by ELINT collection aircraft off the coast, also was designed to pass over one of the SA-2 sites which was thought to be most nearly operational. Thus the secondary objective was to determine the status of SA-2 defenses in order to measure the risk involved in getting complete U-2 coverage of Cuba as rapidly as possible. NRO's second recommendation was therefore conditional: "If there is no SA-2 reaction to the initial U-2 sortie, maximum coverage of the western end of the island by multiple U-2s simultaneously, as soon as weather permits." (There were also certain other recommendations for low level, oblique, and FIREFLY missions.)

64. The Group gave first priority to the San Cristobal mission and recommended to the President that he approve it. The President gave his approval--presumably learning of the San Cristobal reports at this time--and the mission was immediately mounted. It was delayed by weather, however, from 10 through 12 October. On that date operational control was transferred to SAC. There is no reason to believe that the transfer in any way delayed launching the mission, which SAC flew on 14 October. The pilot did not fly the prescribed track, but took a course at an angle to it. Fortunately the planned and actual paths crossed over San Cristobal, and the primary mission was accomplished.

65. After this mission had been approved, but before it had been flown, CIA received on 10 October Navy photographs taken two weeks earlier of the Soviet ship <u>Kasimov</u> off Cuba. These photographs showed clearly identifiable IL-28 crates, which later showed up in U-2 photography of 17 October--along with a number of others which must have come in on unphotographed ships--at San Julian airfield in the western tip of the island. The information appeared in the <u>Checklist</u> of 11 October.

66. During this interim period, the DCI briefed the CIA Subcommittee of House Appropriations on 10 October on the build-up, including the IL-28s. He also commented on MRBMs essentially along the lines of his cables from Nice (para 30), adding that there were many experts who did not believe the Soviets would make such a move, but that he differed with them. He told the Subcommittee that he had authority for an overflight in the next day or so. General

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Carter said much the same thing to Senator Saltonstall the following day (11 October). In reply to Saltonstall's question about Senator Keating's charges of known MRBM sites in Cuba, General Carter said that there were refugee reports but no hard evidence, and that CIA hoped to photograph the areas in the next day or so. General Carter also briefed Senator Stennis on 15 October (before the photography of the previous day was available), again along the same lines.

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O. Notification of the President

67. By this time, photography from the 14 October mission had arrived in Washington and readout had begun. The Director, NPIC, contacted the DD/I in the early evening of the 15th to inform him that a possible MRBM site had been identified in the San Cristobal area. The DD/I notified General Carter (the DCI being out of town). General Carter told him he would notify General Taylor and General Carroll of DIA at dinner, and McGeorge Bundy if he was present. As the readout progressed during the evening the information became firmer and the DD/I decided not to wait until morning to notify White House and State Department officials. About 2200 he passed the information to Mr. Bundy and Mr. Hilsman, who notified the Secretary of State. The following morning (16 October) General Carter and the DD/I briefed Bundy in detail and General Carter at 1100 briefed the President.

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